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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 000543

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [KJUS](#) [KWMN](#) [PTER](#) [KU](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: MOHR ON NEW MINISTERS, MASS GRAVES, MP AL-DAINI

REF: A. BAGHDAD 492
[B](#). BAGHDAD 358
[C](#). KUWAIT 148
[D](#). 2008 KUWAIT 1160
[E](#). 2008 BAGHDAD 1954
[F](#). BAGHDAD 533

Classified By: Deputy Political Counselor Steve Walker for reasons 1.4
(b) and (d).

[1](#). (C) Summary: Minister of Human Rights Wijdan Salim told us on February 24 that she expects the newly appointed Judge Dara will be an effective Minister of Justice, once he negotiates his learning curve. By contrast, she expressed concern about the new Acting Minister of State for Women's Affairs, who she fears will take a conservative, Islamist approach to women's issues. Salim reported that the ICRC is concerned about the lack of GOI progress on uncovering bodies from graves of Kuwaiti missing persons from the Gulf War, which she attributed to the lack of standard operation procedures for using witness information to uncover graves, a situation the GOI is trying to rectify. Salim confirmed that an arrest warrant has been issued for Parliamentarian Mohamed al-Daeni and believes he is guilty of terrorism. End Summary.

NEW MINISTERS OF JUSTICE AND WOMEN'S AFFAIRS

[2](#). (C) Minister of Human Rights Wijdan Salim discussed with PolOffs on February 24 her opinions of two new ministers: Minister of Justice Judge Dara Noor al-Deen (analysis of new Minister to be reported septel) and Acting Minister of State for Women's affairs Khulud al-Majun. Salim, who worked with al-Deen in the Governing Council, predicted that the new Minister of Justice would do a good job but will need some time to learn the issues. Al-Deen told Salim he planned to let Deputy Minister of Justice Ibraheem Posho focus on prisons issues, which will allow him to concentrate on other matters. Salim noted that former Acting Minister of Justice Safa al-Safi did not have much trust in Deputy Minister Posho and did not give him much authority. Al-Deen told Salim that he will only stay in the position for one year, until the next parliamentary elections, currently planned for December.

[3](#). (C) Salim confirmed that Prime Minister Maliki accepted the resignation of former Minister of State for Women's Affairs Nawal al-Sammarae and that he will not offer her another cabinet position (ref A). The new Acting Minister is Khulud al-Majun, the current Minister of State for Provinces. Salim said she has offered al-Majun the full support of the Ministry of Human Rights (MoHR) but expressed concern that al-Majun will have a very conservative and Islamist outlook on women's issues. She bases this on al-Majun's response to the MoHR's recent Victims of Terrorism report (ref B), in which al-Majun recommended that the MoHR cease writing such reports in "an investigative style" and instead address human rights issues with reference to the Quran and Shari'a law.

14. (C) Salim met with ICRC on February 23 to discuss the delays in uncovering the mass graves of Kuwaitis who went missing during Saddam Hussain's invasion of Kuwait. Salim said ICRC is frustrated that the GOI is moving too slowly on this issue and not investigating the graves within the agreed-upon time frame. Salim blamed the delays on "internal GOI problems." The main problem is that the GOI only recently established a set of agreed-upon procedures for dealing with witnesses who have information on grave locations. Witnesses have been unofficially (i.e., Qlocations. Witnesses have been unofficially (i.e., anonymously) providing information on grave locations to various MoHR officials or other GOI officials.

15. (C) The Prime Minister's Legal Adviser Dr. Fadl advised that GOI policy should mandate that witnesses need to either meet formally (i.e., provide names) with the MoHR to discuss the whereabouts of the Kuwaiti graves, or if they wish to remain anonymous, work directly with the ICRC or Kuwaiti government. Salim stressed that the GOI is not ignoring this issue and is working to establish mechanisms for receiving information on grave locations. Salim said ICRC and the Kuwaiti government are complaining because they believe the GOI is intentionally dragging its feet, which is not the case. She said she would try speed up the process of uncovering the graves. (refs C, D)

16. (C) Comment: Another reason for the delays in investigating the Kuwaiti graves is that the MoHR does not have the resources or capacity to investigate more than one

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mass grave at one time. Mass graves from post 2003 and the Saddam era are more politically important for the GOI (ref E). To address this problem, DRL is funding, and has previously funded, the International Commission for Missing Persons (ICMP) to provide training to the MoHR and increase the ministry's capacity. ICRC has provided support to the Medico-Legal Institute (MLI), which handles the forensic analysis of uncovered bodies. UNOPS is working on a project to increase capacity of MoHR missing persons teams in order to work on several graves at one time. UNAMI is funding over \$1 million to increase MoHR capacity to investigate mass graves and will focus on the Kuwaiti sites. (Note: MoHR, ICMP, and ICRC are all slated to participate in the first international conference on forensics and law tentatively scheduled for late April in Baghdad. End Note). If the GOI gives the MoHR more support for mass graves, then the issue will be addressed faster. The GOI has not given the ministry the resources needed, which is why it has been unable to open more than one mass grave at a time. End Comment.

ARREST WARRANT FOR MP AL-DAENI

17. (C) Salim told PolOffs that she received confirmation from the Prime Minister's Chief of Staff Tariq Abdullah that the GOI has issued an arrest warrant for Parliamentarian Mohamed al-Daeni, who is suspected of terrorism (ref F). Salim said al-Daeni has called her about seven times each day for the last few days and is very worried about being arrested. Al-Daeni claimed he is innocent, but that his bodyguards were tortured to "confess" that he was involved in terrorist acts. Salim sent an MoHR inspection team to visit al-Daeni's bodyguards, but the detention officials refused to allow them into the facility where they are being detained. Salim sent a letter to the PM asking for permission to visit the guards and hopes that her teams will be able to do so soon. (Note: Al-Daeni's parliamentary immunity was lifted on February 25, and there are press reports that he was arrested. Several of his colleagues reported that they have not heard from al-Daeni since that day, and are afraid he too

is being held and tortured. End Note.) She added that she knows al-Daeni is guilty because he has previously remarked to her that should he faces any threats of arrest from "certain officials," he will violently resist. (Note: Salim and al-Daeni have met occasionally over the last year at his request, generally to discuss the situation of Sunni detainees in USG and GOI custody. End Note.)
BUTENIS